1979

Triad: Sculpture Projects Doyle/Gourfain/Leicester

University Galleries, Wright State University

TRIAD
Sculpture Projects

Doyle/Gourfain/Leicester

Introduction

The projects documented in this catalog were first conceived in early 1978 by Ed Levine, then chairman of the Department of Art and Art History at Wright State University, and Betty Collings, then director of the University Gallery at The Ohio State University in Columbus. Both institutions had, for five years, been sponsoring a variety of exhibitions and experimental projects that probed various aspects of contemporary art. The similarity of goals between the two institutions made this collaborative effort possible.

Each of the three artists visited Dayton and Columbus in the spring of 1979 to survey possible contexts for his work. The projects were executed in the fall of 1979, using student, faculty, and staff assistance from each institution.

In the end, assessment of this program must be made from a different perspective for each of the artists involved. Tom Doyle had been making large constructions of wooden timbers and planks for some time. For him, this program offered the opportunity to build two new additions to his continuing body of work. Peter Gourfain, on the other hand, had recently made a few large ceramic pots and was anxious to make more. The presence of elaborate ceramic facilities at The Ohio State University permitted him to direct extensive amounts of his time and energy toward this unfolding body of work. For Andrew Leicester, the scale of the program's financial support permitted him to complete one work and make a series of studies/proposals which have since had significant impact on related works completed in other parts of the country.

This program has also presented us with an opportunity to capitalize on regional critical expertise in the person of James Jordan, who has written the essay that appears in this catalog.

In their various forms, each of the artists' projects engaged a wide variety of individuals from the communities involved. Special thanks must go to the faculty and students of the art departments of Wright State University and The Ohio State University. We also wish to thank the Greene County Highway Department and the Ohio Air National Guard for assistance with two of Andrew Leicester's projects. We are indebted to the continued and energetic support of the University Gallery at The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Michael Jones
Director
University Galleries
Wright State University

TRIAD
Sculpture Projects

Doyle/Gourfain/Leicester

This program was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Of the arts of making (tekhne), sculpture is the eldest. The hallmark of proto-Man, of which species Homo Sapiens forms a sub-group, was the manufacture and use of tools. Man, then, was first Homo Faber, Man the maker. Among the earliest indications of an embryonic aesthetic sense are certain regularly-spaced marks on stone or animal bones. Apparently intimately related to the rhythms of manufacture—of striking stone, slivering flint or bone—the repetitive character of such marks is not always a necessary feature of tool function (edge quality, point, etc.). Rather, these marks display Man's pleasure in the retained imprints of his own muscular movements; the same pleasure in the repetition of sound and movement that must have generated the earliest music, the original dance. Repetition of sounds and movement, too, can be hypnotic, vision-inducing activities. Hence the relationship of those tasks which produced the first arts to sympathetic magic, to Man's primordial attempts to alter the external world to his will. Sculpture was born in the tracks of making, in sorcery, as the spoor of need/desire.

The shamanistic character of Man as maker has changed little through the millennia. The i-magic correlation of artist/material/environment inspires a very ancient, near instinctual awe that still moves contemporary artists and art audiences. Although, at first glance, the three artists whose works form the subject of this catalog seem widely at variance, they actually form a convenient triad illustrating the history of sculpture. That history may also be viewed as evolutionary, if one does not burden the word with an outmoded conjuration of qualitative alteration in a Darwinian sense. All style sequences evolve, though not always linearly, certainly not necessarily sequentially. I suggest that each of these artists may be viewed as a representative of different, equally important, and coexistent, artistic messages. Beyond differences in form and media, levels of consciousness intertwine and interweave in both the making and apprehension of art. That implicit content in any work of art, representational or abstract or non-objective, is intimately related to the creation process and to the tools employed in that process.

If we consider, as we must, technology (disavowed *or* embraced) as a prime indicator of cultural character, then given the epistomological bias, the historicism of our society, we must expect to encounter artists working in not only a variety of expressive modes, but at a still greater variety of technological levels as well. Each of these three artists represents an actual and conceptual *tekhnikos* that has profoundly shaped the character of his work as well as the content of that work.

Peter Gourfain is an artist who protests a great many aspects of the contemporary world. His early, passionate involvement with social reform was disillusioned through Party insistence on blind obedience and what he observed as a betrayal of ideals in favor of political opportunism. Purity of ideal, of humane vision, is supremely important to Gourfain. He began his career in New York as a painter. The early 60s found him flirting with a variety of minimalist directions, constantly searching, always somewhat removed from current formalist fashions. Spiritually, he combined a dark, visionary angst and an heroic romanticism akin to artists of the original generation of the New York School. His characteristic sense of risk was already *retardataire* among the younger artists of, then, triumphant Modernism. Since those years he has been galloping back in time at an increasingly accelerating pace. By his own reckoning he currently feels most at home somewhere in the Romanesque period. His studios are littered with books on Romanesque, Early Christian, and Celtic art. Geographically, his most immediate artistic predecessors are native American potters/sculptors of some 1500 years ago. Pre-Columbian art, especially Mimbres ware, is, in fact, a direct influence on his work for this project—the monumental urns. The various stages of his career—from early minimal paintings, to exterior-scaled wood sculpture, to clay forms—has been marked, too, by an increasing reliance on the narrative potential of the human form.

Gourfain took up ceramics almost by accident. While taking his daughter to and from a ceramics course he developed a fascination with clay. Already deeply involved in major works in wood on a monumental scale, he began to transfer similar images to ceramic forms. Gourfain's personal iconography and symbol vocabulary derive from a series of sketch books that he has worked with intermittently since his student days. His cartoon-like style resembles the work of *naifs*, folk-artists, and the popular protest images of the Mexican revolutionary printmaker, Posada. Chicago, Gourfain's hometown (he attended the Chicago Art Institute), has also been the haven for a curious succession of humanist/social commentary artists, from Ivan Albright to Leon Golub to Jim Nutt. Gourfain may be seen as a close relative of this tradition, despite the fact that he has worked in New York since 1961.

The works produced at The Ohio State University, although conceivably functional, are primarily narrative grounds or supports. The mold-cast urns, colossal in scale, most closely resemble funeral containers that have appeared in numerous cultures. The sculpted and painted images are in continuous narrative bands that the artist views, quite correctly, as natural extensions of the ceramic forms. The images are not placid. Gourfain, a quintessential angry artist, despises many aspects of modern culture that his contemporaries take for granted: automobiles, air travel, television, etc. The Early Christian, hieratic character of his figures is perfectly suited to his didactic intent. He is a Jeremiah reviling the spiritual

condition of modern Man and a society so inured to inhumanity that "live" murder on television is unremarkable; a society whose concern for the financial wellbeing of a dinosaurian automotive industry outweighs its interest in or compassion for an acknowledged act of genocide in Cambodia. Gourfain's outrage is not, naturally, assuaged by the peculiar facility of Western society to accommodate any attack on itself, an absorbtive ability to condone revolutionary ardor as mere artistic eccentricity. As Marcuse correctly envisioned, our culture transforms Ecclesiastes into Agonistes.

Gourfain's subject matter ranges from intimate personal anecdote, to current events, to literature, to ancient myth. All are episodically linked in bardic, pictorial parables of good and evil, Gog and Magog, primal incarnations of light and darkness. An argument with a close friend becomes a figure being disemboweled that shares a space with a literal rendition of Stephen Daedelus' tavern dream from *Ulysses*. Similarly, a news report becomes hooded figures with rifles standing over a huddle of slain bodies: the KKK attack in Greensboro, North Carolina. Next door, a disembodied head displays an opened cranium and a brain space filled with coins. The rituals and visions of Man turn on him in an orgy of betrayal, greed, and violence. *Vanitas vanitatum*. . . .

Content emerges from and reinforces form in the continuous band cycles. A leitmotif that marks the majority of the works is the tug of war, a symbolic, sometimes literal struggle, of good versus evil. In a particularly perceptive version, the figures are all pulling in one direction—against themselves, endlessly, an orouboros of despair. Gourfain's visions do not provide psychologically-soothing decoration. They are raw emotion cast into brute form. Urns that have been damaged in firing (a tedious, lengthy process for ceramic works of this size) are, significantly, repaired rather roughly. Their scars are tantamount to the traces of physical wounding, ontological rips rather than mere damage to an inorganic artifact. That the Post-Modernist art world can accommodate Gourfain might be construed as liberality of access or catholicism of taste. Gourfain himself sees his work much as Picasso once disingenuously commented on painting: that it was a weapon of social warfare. A contemporary Blake, Gourfain's most valued, perhaps his *only* valued, gift from Western society is its allowance (albeit sometimes grudgingly) of his freedom to evangelize. A mark of our own decadence of spirit is the easy acceptance which we accord his scathing abuse.

On all of the Gourfain urns a miniature image of the great snake appears. The Serpent Mound, near Chillicothe, Ohio, has long fascinated Tom Doyle also, though not, as with Gourfain, as a personal identification. A native Ohioan, Doyle emigrated to New York in 1957, after a stint in the Army and

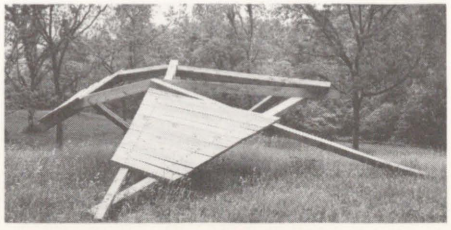
Peter Gourfain
Untitled, details

graduation from The Ohio State University. The rural Ohio background is important for an understanding of Doyle's character and artistic development. First, Doyle's family was one of those old-fashioned, closely-knit clans that valued genealogy and esteemed a sort of frontier ethic of independence and neighborliness. Then there was the pride in work, in hand skills, with a concomitant admiration for well-wrought tools; these he grew up with and observed in local blacksmiths, mechanics, and carpenters. Those value sets, along with stories of nineteenth-century relatives (especially accounts of the Civil War) were decisive influences on Doyle. Finally, as he recalls, his observations of collegiate faculty politics turned him from teaching (at a crucial point) and set his steps toward New York.

Independence and a folksy, easy-going amiability still characterize Doyle's personality. The frugality with materials and love of simple, efficient, old-fashioned tools are still in evidence as well. Whenever possible, Doyle eschews power tools and engineering in favor of hand instruments and intuition. Doyle left Ohio a carver but rapidly switched to a constructivist approach in New York. Although he had worked in stone and metal, his first material love was wood. Since the late 50s, he has made brief forays into plastics and fiberglass, always returning, ultimately, to wood.

The significance of Doyle's early New York work was recently and correctly summarized by Robert Pincus-Witten (*Arts*, September, 1979). In that essay Doyle is identified as a major figure in the first generation of Abstract Expressionist sculptors. David Smith, contemporary with the origin of that movement, was (like many of the painters) essentially a late Cubist. It was left to Doyle and his generation to attempt and realize the effort to " . . . parallel the gestural ambitions of the initial progenitor generation. As Doyle says, 'We took the implied space,'—in de Kooning and Kline, that is—'and made it into a real space'."

That tightly-interlocking, radically-asymmetrical, open-composition approach to the structural gesture that marked especially Franz Kline's work, is still a hallmark of Doyle's sculpture. Continually refined, distilled to soaring wings and curving planes, this essentially-felt gestural intuition is the strongest characteristic of the two works illustrated here, *Olentangy* (originally at Ohio State, now on the Wright State University campus) and *Untitled* (Wright State University). The last five years have brought Doyle to a peak of artistic strength. His forms, as in these two pieces, have become starker, more honest, through his double confidence in the intimate partnership formed between his hand and his materials; plus the empathic sensitivity that he has nurtured for the integration of large, initially ungainly forms into structures of stunningly-balanced grace and delicacy. The artist's great love for antique structures, especially wooden bridges, is a hallmark (spanning space) that weaves through all of his works.



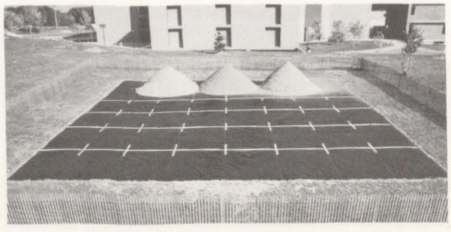
Tom Doyle
Olentangy

Doyle makes dream bridges, forms that literally root themselves into a landscape and echo the contours of the earth that harbors them. His works have a look of belonging to a site, of having aged into their surroundings.

Unlike most of the younger monumental sculptors, Doyle rarely makes drawings. For an artist working in this scale, that eliminates a major source of income. It's the smaller work that sells. Doyle does make models of all of his pieces, usually during his teaching months at Queens College. The large works are constructed whenever he can find space: by commission, through grants, or on his Pennsylvania farm, near Doylesburg (where his family originated). Most of his tapered beams are cut at a sawmill near the farm. He also says he finds a great deal of his most cogent criticism there, in the comments of his rural neighbors. No better sense of Doyle, the man and the vision, can be had than his remark on a piece commissioned for a river-bank site in Dayton, Ohio. "I like it near the water. The sound of flowing water suits my work and I hope that some of the Dayton people will enjoy just sitting on it, maybe fishing."

Andrew Leicester is the youngest artist of the trio. An intense Englishman, Leicester completed a graduate degree in this country and stayed on to teach and make art. He is like a precocious, furiously energetic kid in a technological toy store. Leicester's working year is loosely divided into two segments: planning/writing proposals and executing those that get funded. At first glance, one might suppose that he is working in several distinctly different directions at the same time. The underlying theme of all his work, however, is the same: process, change, and visual alteration through movement—whether naturally caused or technologically induced. In each branch of his current series of projects, form decay (or dissociation) and a correlate negentropic regeneration of new form is explored.

Since the mid-70s Leicester has been fascinated by the effects of water on earth. His "Rainfall-Area Projects" series includes the erosion piece, *Three Cones*, at Wright State University. Most works in the series exist as elegant, precise drawings; as documented events; and as full-scale works or large working models. In the latter category were the Mississippi River erosion works of 1972-1976 and the tableware erosions of the late 70s in which cups, saucers, and plates were buried in earth cones. When water was steadily applied from above, the works became miniature buttes and plateaus topped with the quite ordinary objects that had determined the shape of the eroded earth platforms. At Wright State, a longer process using natural precipitation was planned. A 60′ × 65′ rectangle of black polyethylene was fixed to a gentle slope. The rectangle was divided into a grid with white lines and three cones of varigated sand/gravel strata were placed at the head of the slope. A pre-set, electronically-controlled movie camera was installed to make a single-frame, time lapse record over the winter months. Installed in early fall, the mounds were expected to erode during the usually inclement Ohio winter. The notion was elegant, novel, and provocative. Unfortunately, it didn't work. The sand mix compacted too well and the winter was relatively mild and dry.



Andrew Leicester
Three Cones
Rainfall Erosion Project

The same end, unfortunately, marked Leicester's two other projects at Wright State and The Ohio State University (all are still, however, in process). Since about 1974 he has been developing his "Highway Projects" series. Essentially these are timed sculpture, that is, they are individual works meant to be viewed over a given time span and involve spatial movement on the part of the viewer; as, for example, from a moving car. After selecting his sites, the artist constructs meticulously-scaled terrain models in which, through trial and error, he determines the exact placement of each form unit in order to maximize the dramatic effect of the optical illusion to come. These single units, placed at varying angles and elevations, are generally seen as random forms from the highway. As the viewer's automobile travels toward and past them, they merge, visually, to create a single, illusory geometric form. As the site recedes, the form once again resolves into discrete component sections. Leicester, in effect, uses the viewer's motion to create a cinema of illusion. The idea and its results are brilliant novelties, as evidenced by the success of the series of works in Minnesota and at Art Park, in upstate New York.

So why haven't more of them been realized? Probably because of the same, or similar, set of circumstances that so far has prevented the Columbus project from getting past the drawing stage. Several designs were proposed for grassy areas bounded by freeway interchanges or cloverleaves. In addition to their appeal as sheer relief from the mindless concrete hypnotism of modern interstate design, the works were to have doubled as visual reference points for aircraft. As we all know, bureaucratic minds move slowly; bureaucratic minds in harmony (as in public construction projects) approach glacial inertia. To date, muggy disputes over jurisdiction, greyed overlaps in authority, and "planned potential alterations" in highway configurations have prevented approval of the plan. One suspects, too, a bit of local artistic chauvinism at work. Whatever the cause, the opportunity for trying out a stimulating new direction in public art is being wasted.

Leicester's third major series of works has been in conjunction with the Earth Resources Observation (EROS) Program. EROS currently has two Landsat satellites in orbit. Each has video and photographic transmitting capabilities in both black/white and infrared electronic color. The satellites "view" a strip of the earth 115 miles wide and photographs of any location are available to the public for a modest price. By placing his "drawings" at specific latitudinal/longitudinal coordinates, Leicester then watches weather forecasts, hopes for a clear day, and orders his photos from NASA. Sound simple? It isn't.

An enormous amount of planning and coordination goes into such a project. One of the earthworks was in process at the time of the Wright State visit:

> The site is an area of range land, eight miles square, located on a privately-owned ranch northwest of Amarillo, Texas. The image is a linear, illusionistic rendering of a stake. (The project site lies in an area commonly referred to as the Staked Plains . . .)

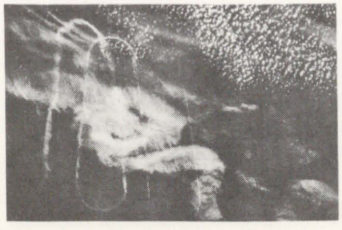
In order to be distinguishable from Landsat photos, the drawing "lines" were to be 600 feet wide and some

three miles long. Lines are produced in winter wheat or other flora. The color difference between the areas of nitrogen-fertilized plants and natural surrounding growth reproduces, on the satellite images, as a line drawing in red. No matter what one thinks of Leicester's imagery, the idea and use of technology is a tour de force.

The version of this Landsat process, his third project to be executed in Ohio, was even more complex. Like Gourfain and Doyle, Leicester was fascinated by The Serpent Mound. In an unlikely-sounding series of negotiations, Leicester and the Wright State gallery director, Michael Jones, persuaded a local Air Force National Guard commander to time a flight of four jet fighters over Lake St. Marys north of Dayton, so that their contrails (high altitude exhaust trails) could be photographed by Landsat. The pilots were to fly in a tight formation so that the smoke image produced by their collective exhausts would blend into an image of the Serpent. Needless to say, it would have been quite an exercise in timing and precision formation flying. So far, (October, 1980) the project hasn't materialized. The Air Force is willing, but the weather, again, has not cooperated. Lake St. Marys, it was decided, is too small, so the target is now Lake Erie on June 6th, 24th, or July 12th, at 10:17 am.

The question of realization needs to be raised here. That is, do projects like these *need* to be completed and given physical documentation? The conceptual aspect alone, the elegance of the presentations, and Leicester's own imaginative gusto, his utter confidence in the pace of contemporary life itself as a medium for art more than compensates, to me, for the occasional failure of transformation from idea to realization. For the viewer, imagining the project may even be, in the long run, more intriguing than the actualization of the piece. Some years ago I was discussing with a renowned Renaissance scholar the relative scarcity of completed works by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo, the professor mused, may have simply found the physical labor of completing his works too boring—since he had already enjoyed them, fully formed, in his mind's eye. The ephemerality of conceptual art disturbs many art lovers, but, paradoxically, ideas are often more impermeable to change than mere physical objects. Perhaps, in time, contemporary art audiences, deluged by visual messages, will come to enjoy the contents of a museum of ideas more than the rapidly proliferating, mediocre objets d'art that crowd our world space more densely year by year.

Each of these three artists may be taken to represent an aspect of the contemporary scene. Multilayered realities, especially those in which we are immediately involved, are best organized with simple conceptual tools. History, in fact, is a manipulated sequence of events to which we may choose (or not) to accord an affective reality. The "facts" of history are simply raw material; only after the historian gives them form do they take on a semblance of "truth." The same is true for contemporary events, for art. The tools with which we grasp events determine our reality, not the events themselves. If we see this triad of artists each as a facet of a larger series of events; as representatives of the plurality of Post-Modern art in 1980, we may discover new insights into not



Example of an aircraft contrail recorded by Landsat satellite

only their work, but into that of other artists as well. The following characterizations, then, are only one conceptualization, elaborate on them as you will.

Peter Gourfain is, of course, paleotechnic. His is the vision and ancient technology of hand and matter, earth and fire. He is representative of Saturnos, giant of the proto-divinities. In mythoccultic parlance, Gourfain is the "Daimoniacal" man, the Faustian prophet warning of destruction, calling to us out of our own pasts. He is of Yesod, the foundation of the Kabbalist's tree; hence, Tarot discs, Capricorn, and Yang in the Chinese wheel. Tom Doyle is the lover of steel tools, a re-shaper of natural forms. Doyle is a craftsman who accepts the most necessary elements of our technological world and rejects the rest. He is neotechnical man, accepting electro/mechanical force, relying more on the steel-based tools of the last century. Doyle is Mars, wood-hewer, builder, spanner of waters. An artistic representative of the best characteristics of historic art in the West. He is stave and cup of Tarot, Tiphereth of the Kabbala, the maker astride past and present who, with a stable hold on each, resides firmly in the present. Doyle is the equilibrium of Taurus, the tension of Yin and Yang that may, in time, give birth to the future. Andrew Leicester represents an embryonic, post-technological synthesis, beyond steel and carbon-based industrialization. All of Leicester's works postulate a peculiar time/space intimacy between viewer and art-event that links the two into a fabric of relative causality. He assumes, as a matter of course, an intuitive Heisenbergian interaction of viewer and viewed. Leicester's Uranian projects represent a new level of technology of which we are only the primitives: post-industrial, proto-atomic, paleorelativist. He is sword of Tarot; Aquarius; the air/fire of the Phoenix; flux and change for its own sake, for its own aesthetic; Da'ath of the Kabbala; Yin at a campfire of hydrogen fusion.

What, finally, fascinates me about these three artists and the characteristics that they represent is their diversity—all are completely conversant with contemporary art, yet might as well come from different worlds. At the same time, I am intrigued by the ease with which they seemed to fit into the trinitarian outline of this essay, the extraordinary simplicity of making them into archetypes. The latter, more than any other characteristic of personality or work, for me marks their contemporaniety: individual and individually diverse, history ridden, faceted into complex expressive modes that reflect inner and outer vision at the same time, children of fashion never satisfied, never ceasing to search. Each of these three represents an important face of the present, our pasts and futures, our expanding inner mapping of the mechanisms with which we grasp at the real—the mechanisms most clearly defined by art.

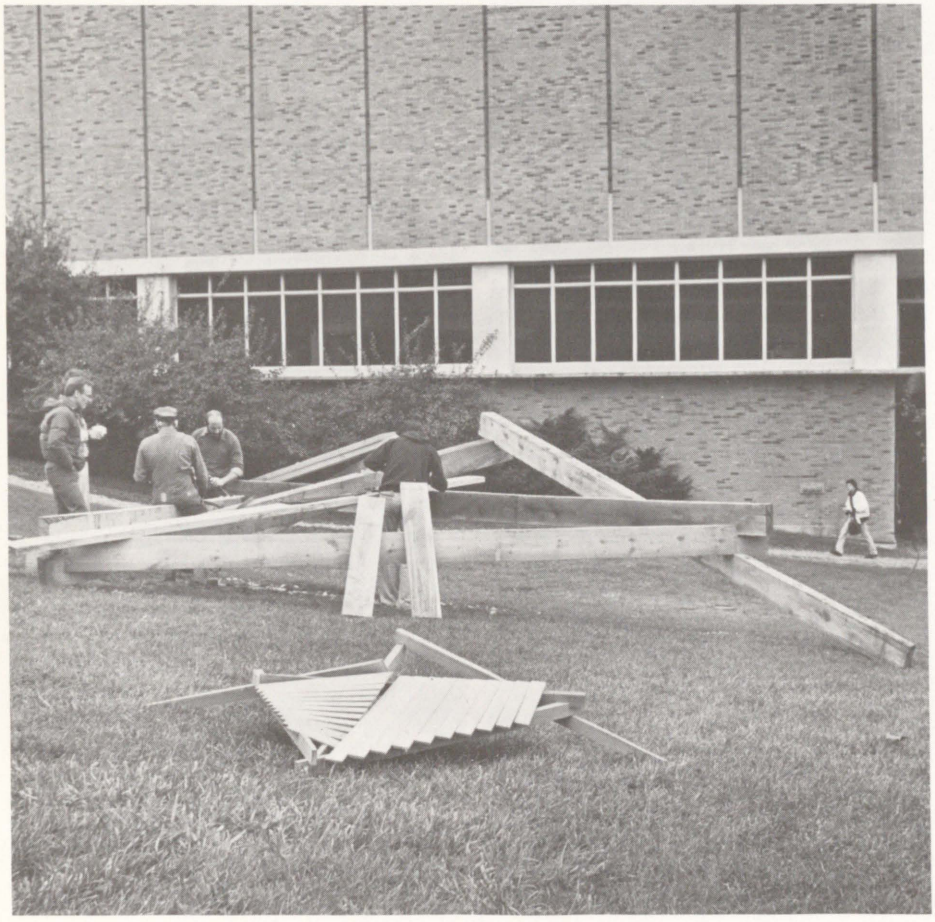
Jim Jordan
Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1980

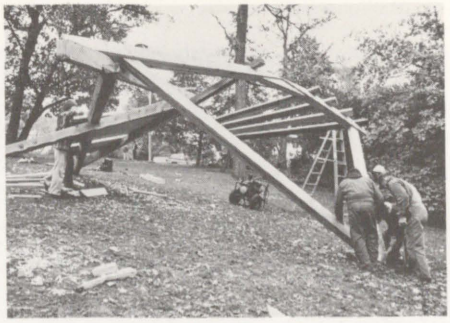
Although Doyle's work is nearly always "monumental" in scale, he brings to it a jeweler's sense of precision. After building a preliminary model to arrive at an estimate of the number and type of timbers required, he has the wood cut and roughly tapered. With the materials and an idea, he then spends a great deal of time at his site—visualizing the work, talking to passers-by, generally absorbing an ambience that will carry him to the next stage of the project.

At the point of beginning construction, Doyle has usually already mentally modified the initial idea for the structure in order to imbed it as naturally as possible into the site. Specific dimensions, even major axial movements and planes, are altered as the work progresses. In the process of building, Doyle combines both of the traditional sculptural approaches, additive and subtractive. For example, in *Olentangy*, a major helical plane was perceived to be too large and dominant, a quality that could only have been noticed at the chosen site. Doyle, then began to cut back into the timbered plane, shaping and refining it as if he were carving, not constructing, the form. *J.J.*

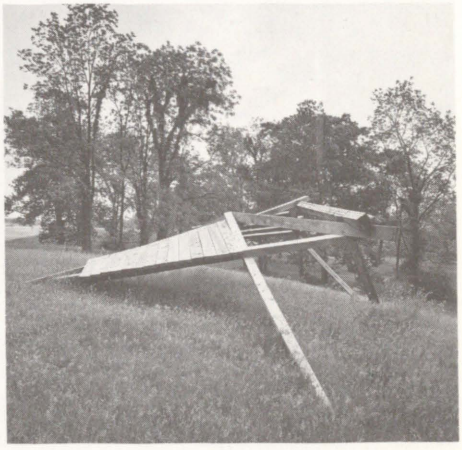
Tom Doyle

Untitled
Oak and white pine beams and white pine planks
Installed at Wright State University in October 1979

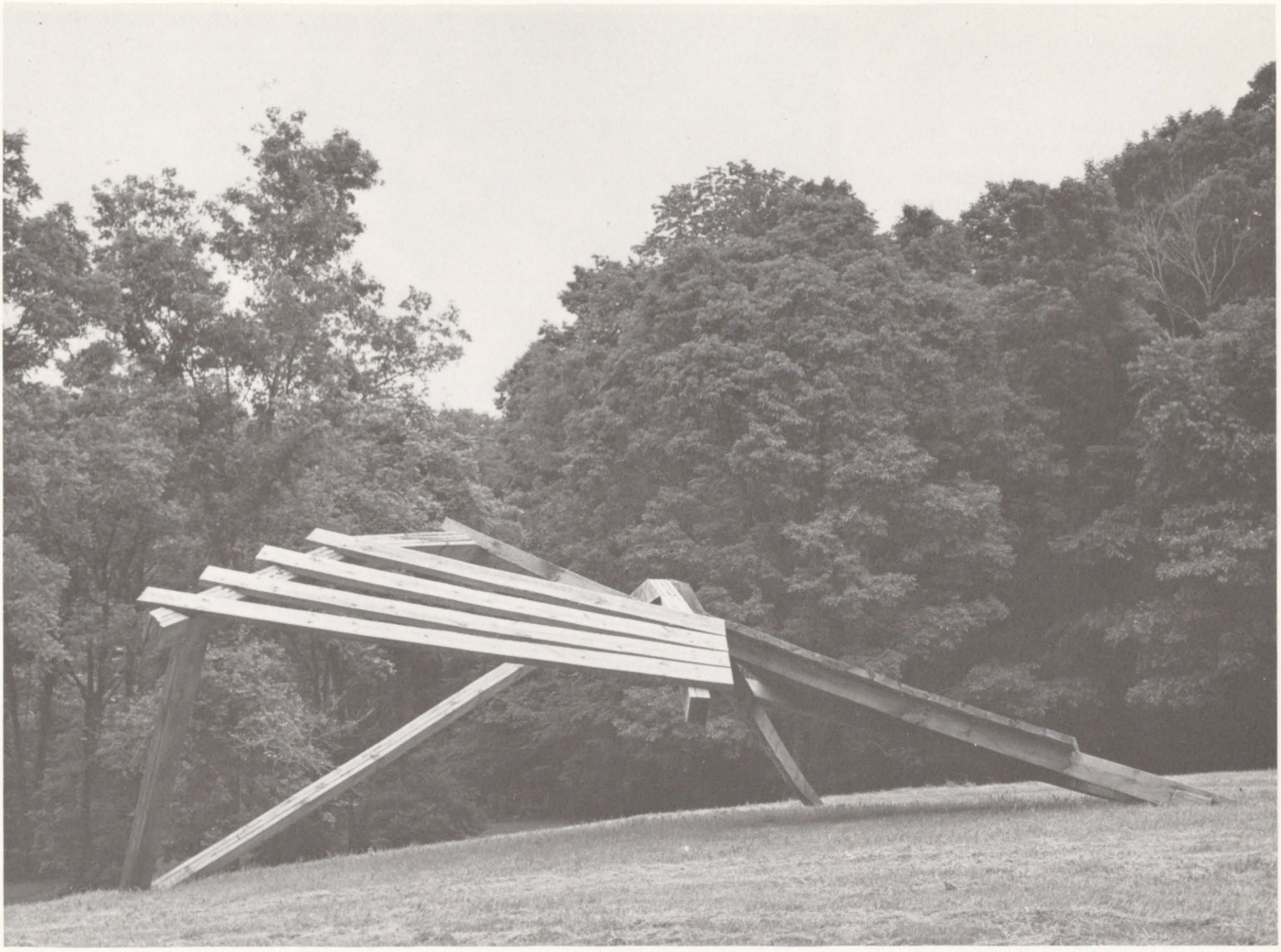




Olentangy
White pine timbers and laminated beams and planks
Installed at The Ohio State University in October 1979



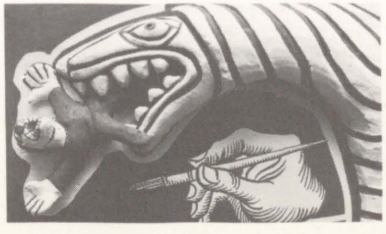
Olentangy
Reinstalled at Wright State University in May 1980

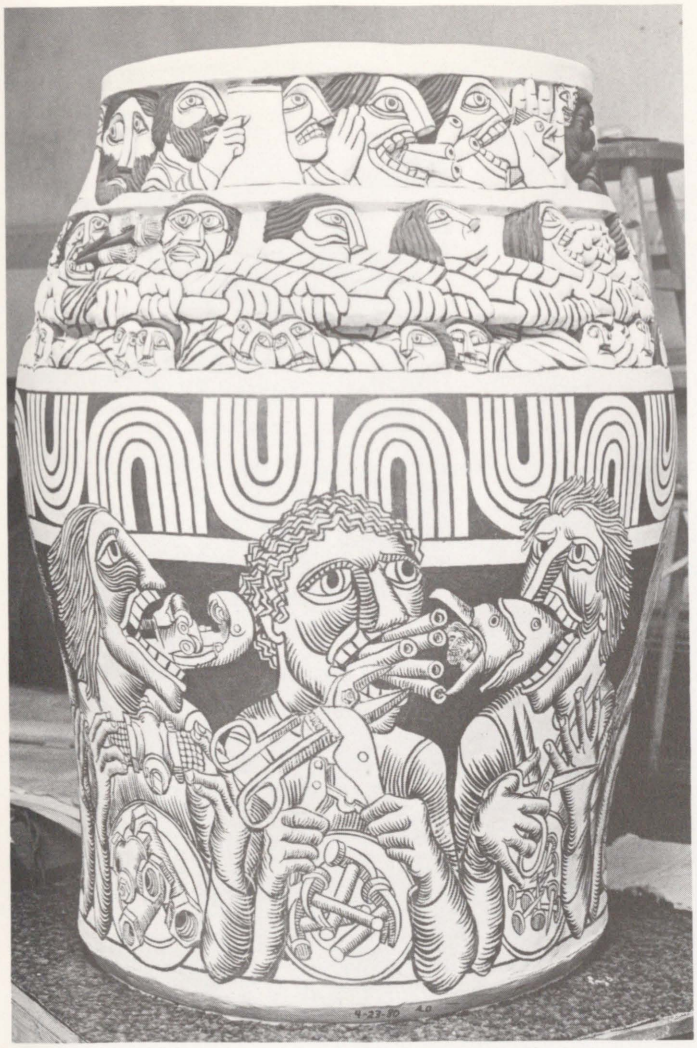


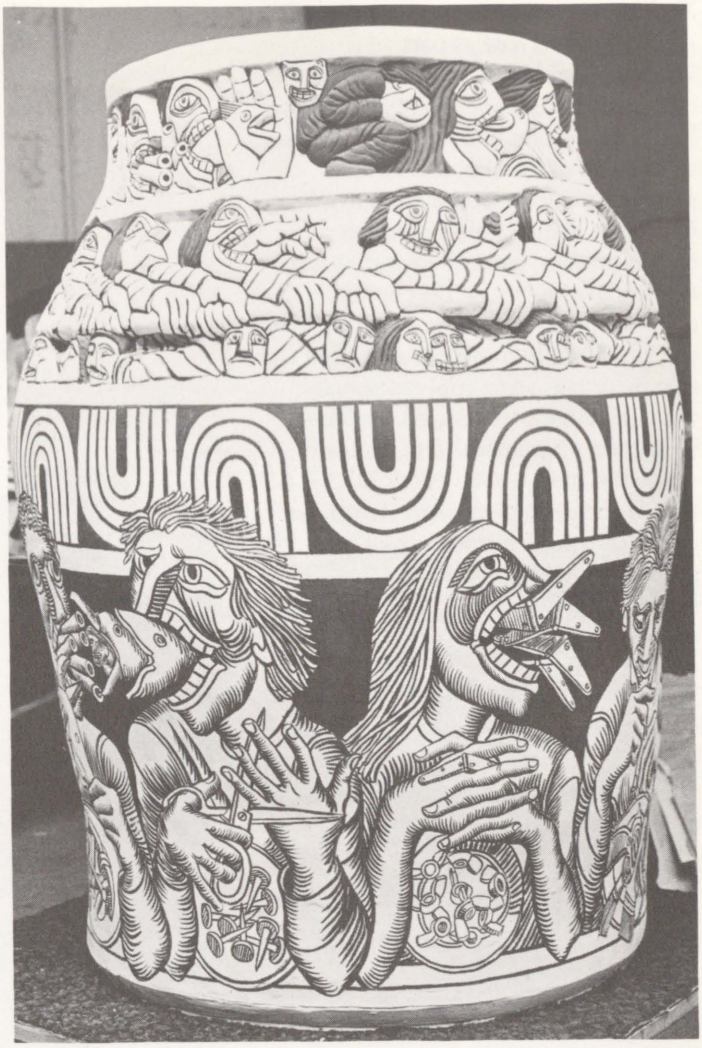
Peter Gourfain is not a large man, physically. His intensity of presence however, belies his stature. At work in the crowded basement studio at The Ohio State University, he reminded me of some anomalous Loki or Hephaestus, leaning into the huge urns to complete an interior relief configuration or peering intently at a band of painted figures. Virtually all of the work is done free-hand, with only passing glances at preliminary sketches. Once a section had been completed, he rarely went back to it except to add other elements. The total configuration of each piece is additive and intuitive, each previous urn influenced the next; similarly, each new area (painted or sculpted) on a specific urn suggested the next area or element. In this sense the urn decoration "grew" in a fashion directly analogous to the working methods of so-called primitive artists. Like them, Gourfain has a predetermined set of iconographic forms (in his case personal symbol sets, not tribal/cultural ones) on which he draws to assemble each narrative/decorative sequence. *J.J.*

Peter Gourfain

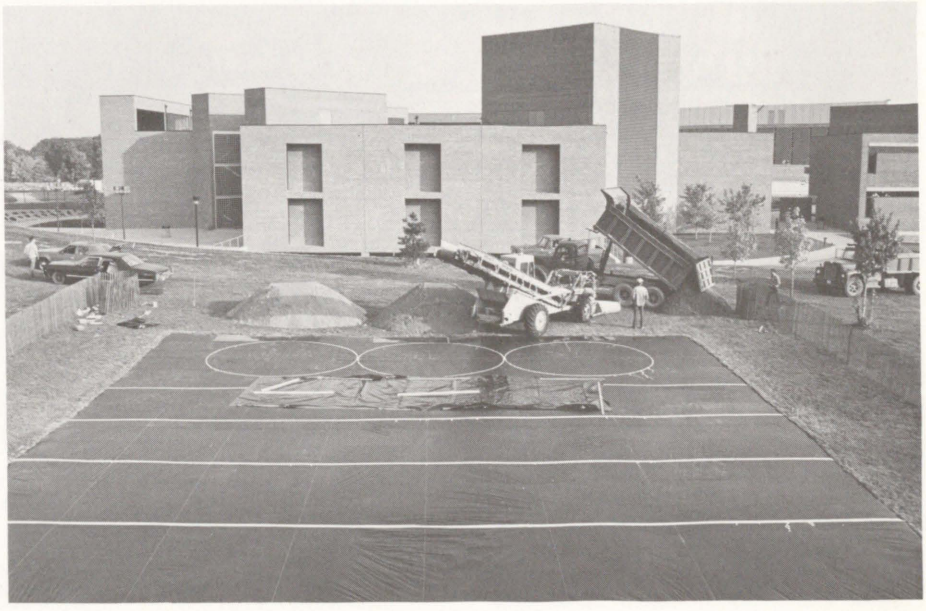
Untitled
Ceramic pots, red clay, red slip, white slip
Pots executed at The Ohio State University from October 1979-March 1980





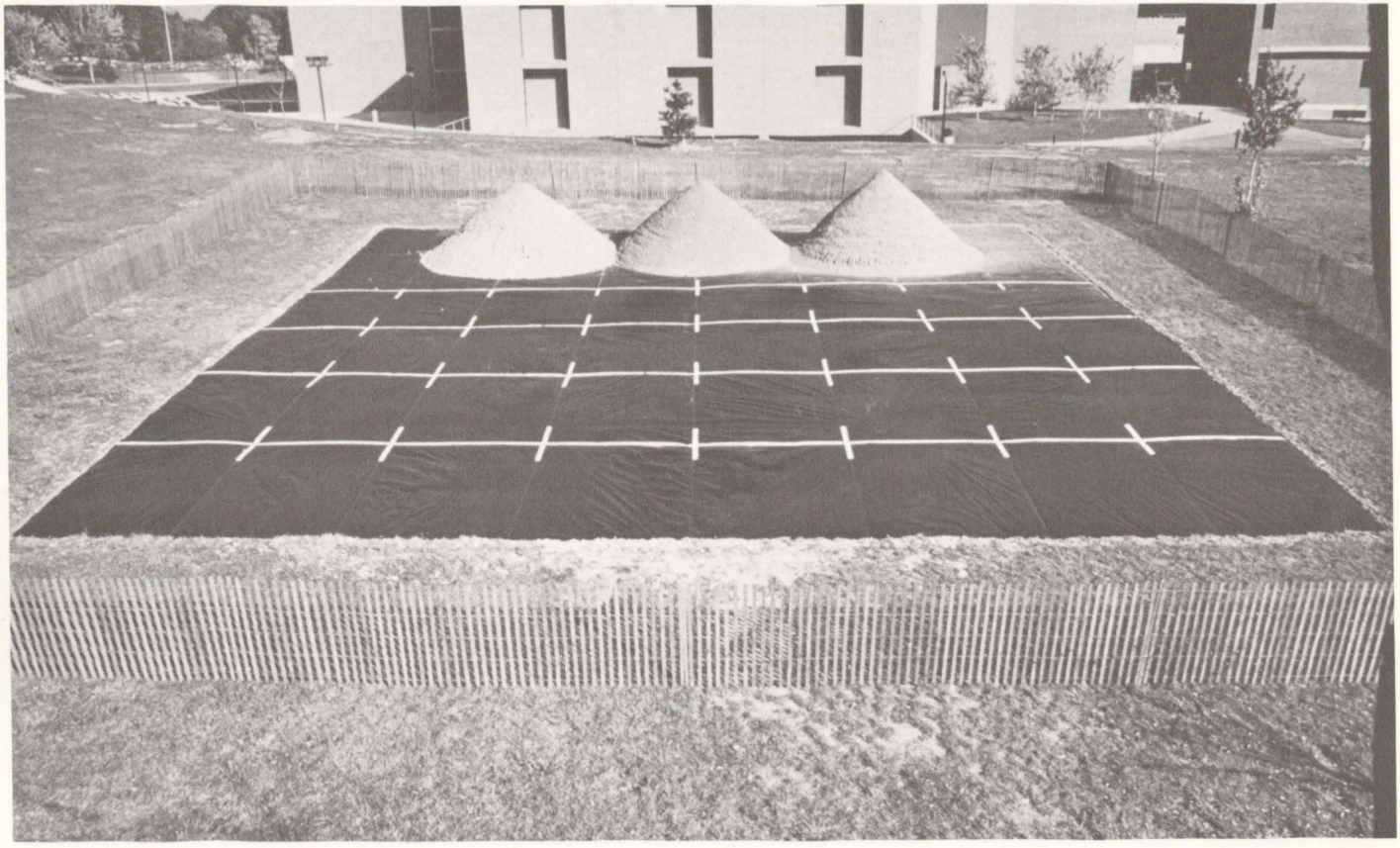


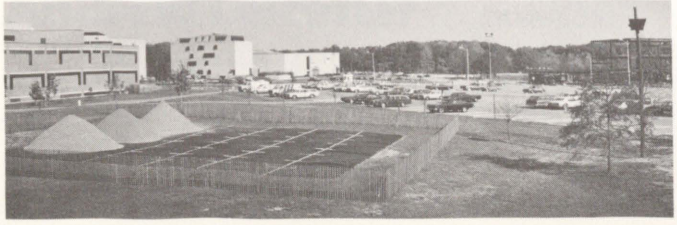
Andrew Leicester's creation process is based on his role as part knowledgeable visual artist and part enthusiastic technologist. He typically has a set of notes and sketches of ideas that rely on natural or scientific phenomena to be actualized. In every case, that actualization involves transformation either by wind, water, motion of viewers, or perceptual distance (as in the Landsat works). The sets of ideas are a sort of stockroom that he draws on to apply to specific sites, modifying as needed. Another important characteristic of Leicester's work that must not be overlooked is that of social *engagement*. Except for certain working models, all of his pieces are in the public domain. This is true of the process sculpture, the erosion works, the terrain plans (many of which, technically, are "landscape architecture"), even the Landsat works—for a modest fee anyone can order a color print of the mega-drawings visible from orbit. In this sense, although he doesn't make a major issue of it, Leicester has accomplished what many fashionable artists only talk about: he has moved his work outside the economic art axis of museum/gallery/private collector, to bring it directly to the larger public area of experience. *J.J.*



Andrew Leicester

Three Cones
Rainfall erosion project
Sand, polyethylene, snowfence
Installed at Wright State University in October 1979

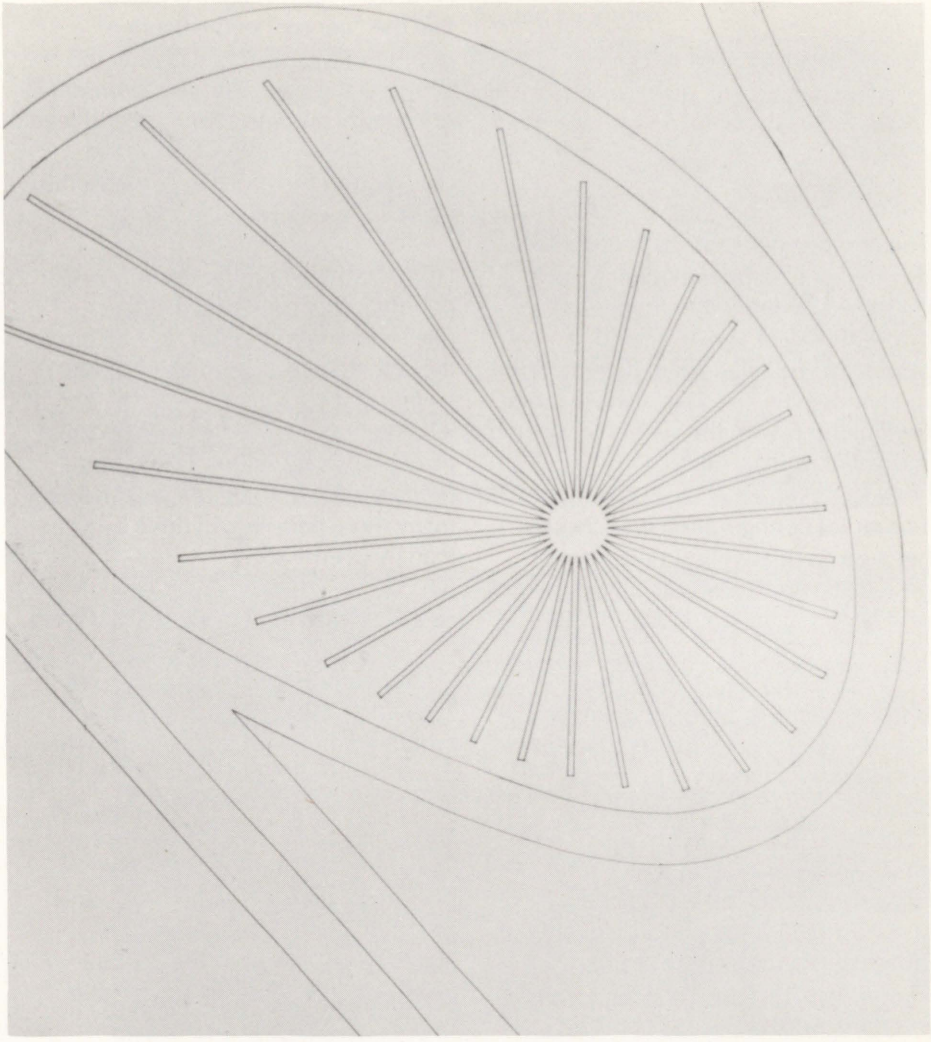




Proposal for
The Aerial/Highway Project
Columbus, Ohio

The artwork is situated within a circular quadrant of a highway cloverleaf. It is composed of thirty concrete "lines," 3.5 feet wide, radiating out from the central area of the site to within 15 feet of the encircling roadway. The figure's center is eccentrically placed so that the shortest radius is 138 feet and the longest is 393 feet.

The cloverleaf—in this case, there is only one quadrant cell—lies beneath the approach corridors for aircraft using the Port Columbus International Airport. The figure is easily discernible from the air. Additionally, this particular junction—17th Avenue and Route 62—is the main entrance and exit for airport traffic going to and from downtown Columbus. It is very likely that a large percentage of travelers will see the figure twice, from the air and from the ground.



The two distinct vantage points allow the viewer to experience the work in entirely different ways. From a plane 1000-2000 feet above ground, it appears to be a flat, static pattern. From the highway, it is visible at close range and interacts with the viewer in a much more dynamic fashion.

The radial configuration was chosen because its relatively simple form or gestalt allows it to be quickly perceived in the limited time available to the viewer.

From the air, the figure's dimensions seem to fluctuate in direct proportion to the altitude of the aircraft. The higher up, the less distinct the periphery. The center remains visible because it is the focus for all thirty radii which form a solid 40-foot diameter circle. Just around this juncture, an area of optical vibration occurs as the eye tries to discern exactly where the lines separate from the nucleus.

Also, from above, it is very clear that the "center" of the figure is eccentrically placed relative to the center of the cell. This displacement is not readily apparent from ground level as the angle of view is always too oblique and too close to perceive the figure in its entirety.

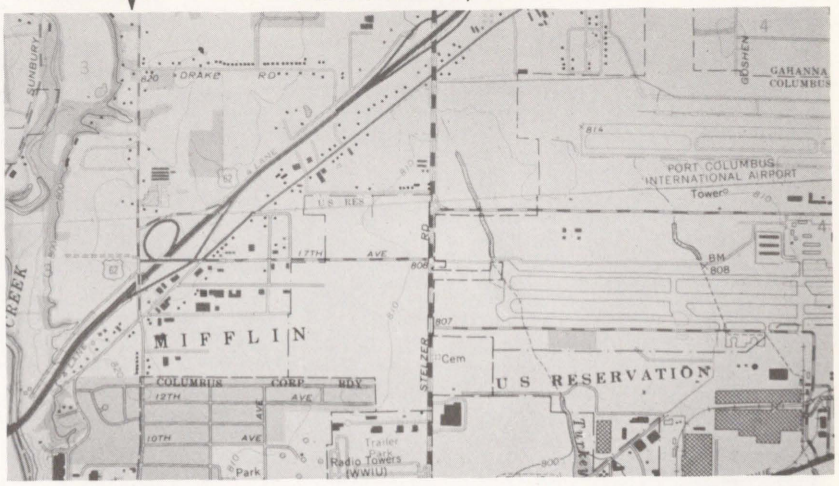
From the highway, the figure is peripherally experienced as a phenomenon in motion. As one circles the cell, there is a strong kinesthetic feeling that the figure is rotating about its center counter to the direction that the viewer is traveling. This is the primary view of the work, as obviously many more people will drive by rather than fly overhead.

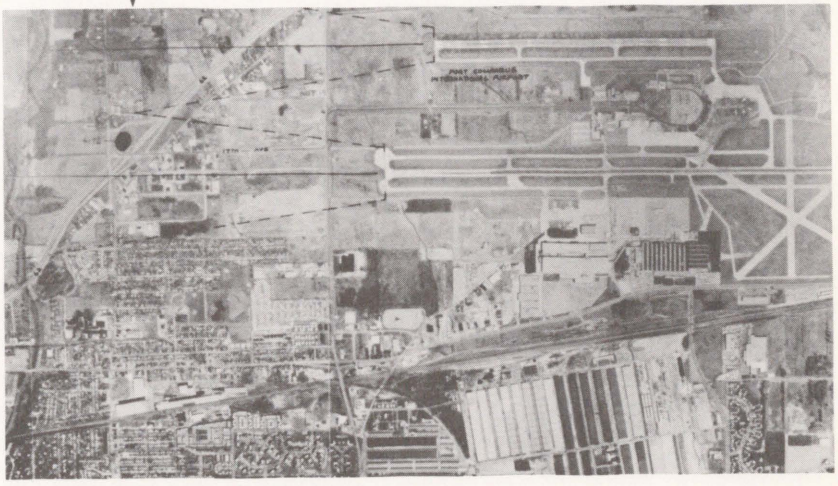
As a Navigational Fix for V.F.R. Flyers

I have chosen to place the work within the freeway system because aircraft commonly take their bearings from prominent highways, especially when flying by visual flight rules (V.F.R.). If a pilot is familiar with the area, the anonymity of the freeway is lessened by recognition of other more subtle landmarks such as office towers and shopping centers. However, the highway still serves as the general cueing device along which the eye travels.

To the pilot unaccustomed to the city and its airport location, the freeway can be deceptive because of its regular repetition of cloverleaves and intersections. This confusion is often compounded when navigating off metropolitan outer loop systems. These tend to encompass the city in vast imperceptible curves that can gradually shift from, say, a northerly direction to a westerly one without the pilot being totally aware of the change. Even though the pilot may be in direct radio contact with the tower, it is still necessary to give one's bearings, especially in heavy traffic or in a holding pattern awaiting clearance. If each of the numerous, repetitious cloverleaves were to contain a distinct, easily-visible symbol, a pilot approaching the city would have little trouble relaying his position to the control tower.

Site indicated by arrows





Aside from its excellent visibility within an urban area, the freeway system would be especially suitable for this type of project because of the availability of large, clear, open spaces. The cloverleaf in particular is ideal because the land has no utilitarian function, yet each cell, on the average, contains 280,000 square feet of land.

It is clear that by placing symbols within cloverleaf cells, these redundant landscapes could serve a vital role in assisting aircraft, in particular the small private and business plane, to more safely navigate within the metropolitan complex. *Andrew Leicester*
September, 1979

Map and aerial photograph indicating proposed site

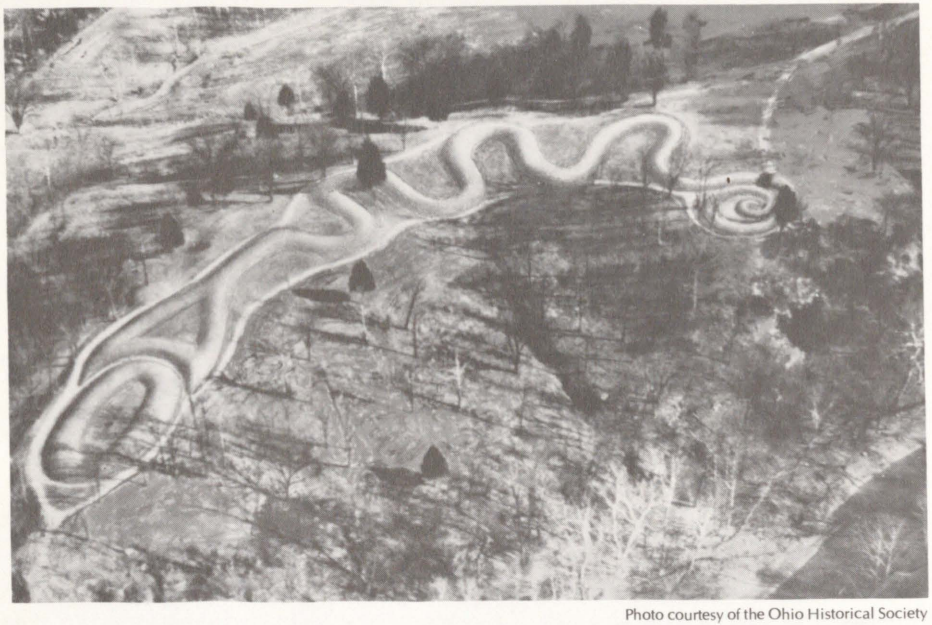


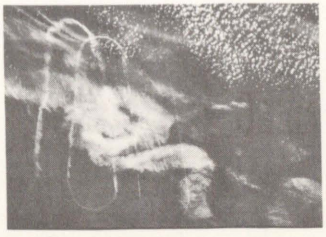
Photo courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

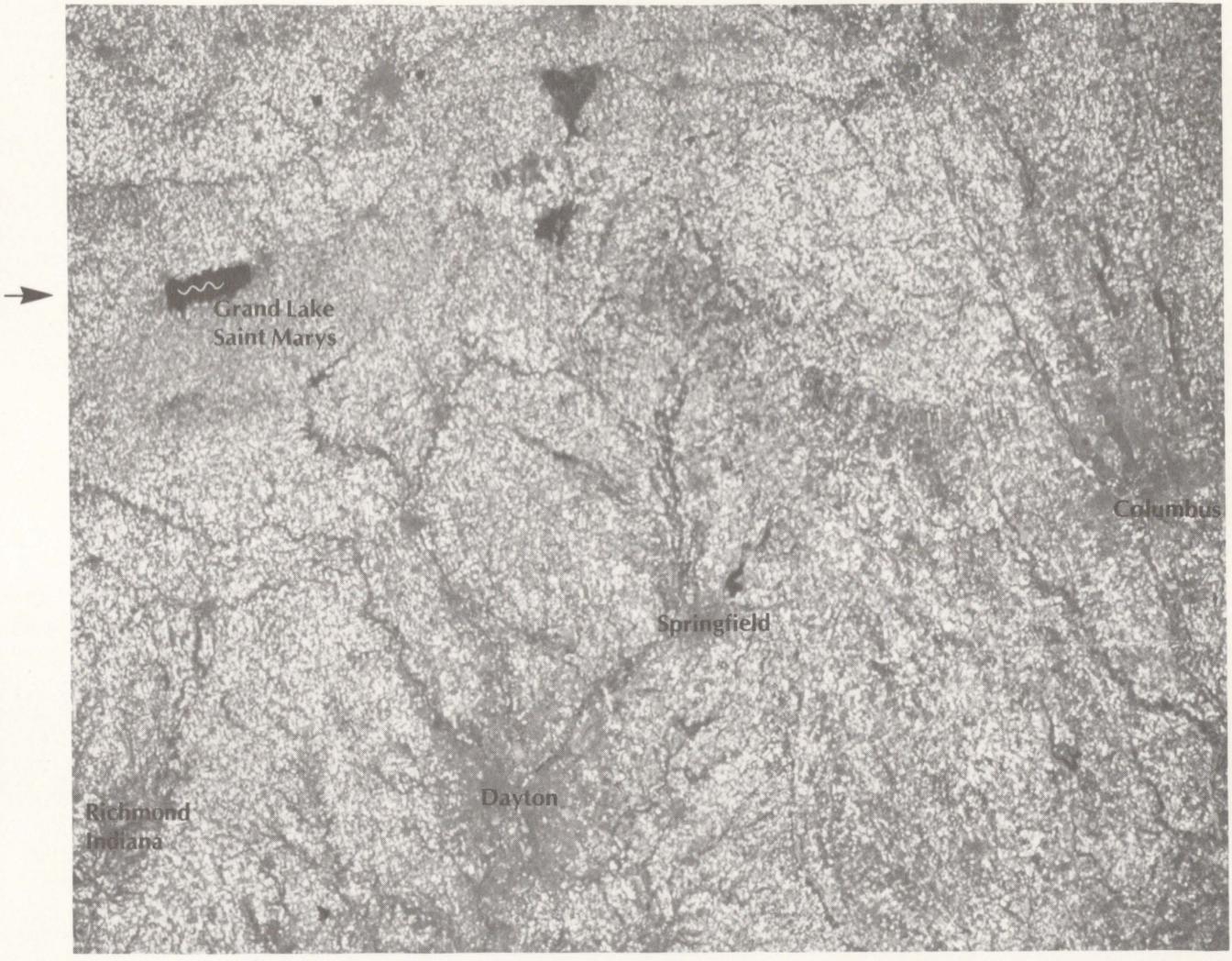
Serpent Mound

Lake Serpent is part of an ongoing series of works designed to be imaged by the Landsat satellite. It involves the drawing of the snake image of southern Ohio's Serpent Mound (one of America's oldest pre-historic images) over a lake using twentieth century aeronautical and electronic technology. Jet aircraft flying in tight formation are to travel a serpentine course directly above the chosen lake's surface at an altitude where their exhausts produce a visible vapor trail. This maneuver is to be completed approximately two minutes before the Landsat satellite passes overhead and records the area. To the satellite, which is equipped with a variety of heat-sensitive imaging devices, the jet "contrails" appear white against the lake body which, being cold, appears black. The resulting "picture" will be recorded electronically and stored in a computer along with other Landsat images. All images which Landsat has generated are in the public domain, so this work will be widely available (color slides are available from EROS Data Center for $1).

As part of the execution of this project in Ohio, the Ohio Air National Guard 178th Tactical Squadron has graciously agreed to integrate a "satellite flyby" in conjunction with regular training missions. The original proposed location for the flyby was over Grand Lake near St. Marys, Ohio. It has since been determined that this lake is too small to provide a suitable background for the project, and the maneuver site has been moved to Lake Erie in the vicinity of South Bass Island. *A.L.*

Lake Serpent
Aircraft-generated image for Landsat satellite project attempted on various dates from September 1979-June 1980





Satellite photograph of original site with simulated serpent image

Aircraft of the 178th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Ohio Air National Guard, Springfield, Ohio

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